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ABSTRACT

This guide is to help students become more aware of the wide variety of United Nations' (UN) activities taking place in the world; to give students an interest in the affairs of the UN; and to lay the foundations for continuing interest in the UN. In this activity students read articles of recent world events in which the UN has been involved, then follow up with discussion and writing activities. A reference list of UN organizations and conferences for further activities is included. Students are instructed to read newspaper articles that are attached and to make lists using the headings: What?, Where?, When?, Why?, Results, and Questions. Once the lists are completed students are instructed to answer the following questions: (1) What was in these articles that you already knew? (2) What three things most interested you? (3) What three things most surprised you? and (4) What three things do you need more information about to make sense of them? (EH)

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The United Nations in the News:

Making Your Classroom a United Nations Information Centre

An Approach for All Grade Levels

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A Project of the
Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association
for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations

Prepared by Ken Osborne

SO 025 632

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Note to Teachers

The purposes of this activity can be simply stated. They are:

1. to help students learn something of the wide variety of United Nations' activities taking place in the world;

2. to give them an interest in the affairs of the United Nations;

3. to lay the foundations for continuing interest in the United Nations.

More specific objectives [e.g. just what aspects of U.N. activity students should know] are implicit in the questions and instructions on the following pages. Also understood is the practice students will gain in such skills as reading, comprehension, analysis, discussion, etc.

This activity consists of reading, digesting and reporting on the newspaper articles printed in the pages that follow. Whether this is done as a whole class activity, individually, or in groups, is a matter of personal choice. The articles can easily accommodate any of these approaches.

This activity should be possible at a variety of grade levels, ranging from Grade 4 upwards. If an article is thought to be too difficult for a particular group of students, it can obviously be easily omitted. However, one of the advantages of including a variety of articles of varying lengths and levels of difficulty is that this allows for the reality that any class will contain students of differing levels of accomplishment. Thus, you might want to group the articles differently depending on your knowledge of your students. As things stand, there is no particular rationale behind the way I have grouped the articles. They are compiled more or less randomly.

This activity addresses questions of knowledge and attitudes. It is intended to teach students about the rich variety of U.N. activities in today's world and to arouse in them some interest in and commitment to the U.N. and its work.

It is easy to update this activity by simply using new articles as they occur. Even I, a U.N. fan, am amazed at the amount of information there is on the U.N. once one starts looking for it. It's often buried away in the back pages or in obscure paragraphs, but it is there. In this regard, I would draw to your attention to that part of the Instructions which suggests that students themselves start monitoring the newspapers on an ongoing basis for U.N.-related news. This is very important if this activity is to be more than a one-shot deal. If it is to work, however, you will need to make sure that newspapers are brought to class regularly and that students are assigned to read and clip them. The *Free Press* and the *Globe and Mail* are the most useful. My suggestion is that pairs of students can assigned this task on a weekly basis. It needs only a minimum of training for them to learn what to do, some time for them to do it in or or out of class, and some continuing monitoring by the teacher. It needs also some bulletin board space for the clippings to be displayed, organized and explained, as described below. Ideally, some part of your classroom, and your teaching, will be dedicated to dealing with U.N. news on a continuing basis.

For further information on teaching about the U.N., check *The Manitoba Social Science Teacher*, 21 [4], April, 1995; and 22 [1], September, 1995. See also the *Canadian Reference Guide to the United Nations*, available free from The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa K1A 0G2. The September 1995 issue of *The Manitoba Social Science Teacher* contains a study guide to this resource, prepared by Lloyd Nelson and Tony Rice.

Introduction

Few people realize how involved the United Nations is in the world's affairs, not just in the reasonably well-known business of peacekeeping, as in Bosnia, Haiti or Rwanda, and in the form of high-profile conferences and declarations, but in literally thousands of small ways that often pass unnoticed. A careful reading of a reasonable newspaper will soon turn up a range of references to the work of the United Nations, often described only briefly in a short paragraph, with out any big headlines, but described nonetheless. And these descriptions are only the tip of the iceberg: for every thing that gets reported in the newspaper, there are hundreds and hundreds that pass unnoticed.

In Canada, we don't notice this because we are lucky enough to live in a country that is at peace, with a high standard of living, and with little or no need of direct help from the United Nations. We don't need U.N. help to dig wells, to pipe clean water, to prevent soil erosion, to put up camps for refugees, to run clinics for dying children, to vaccinate and immunize, to keep peace among warring groups, to build schools and train teachers, to fly in emergency food rations, to protect human rights, to bury massacre victims, to see that elections are honest, and so on and so on. Though not all Canadians share in our wealth and good fortune, by the world's standards we are a have, not a have-not, country, and so we don't need the help of the U.N. As a result, we don't see it at work in our daily lives and so we don't think much about it.

Though we don't need the U.N. directly, we certainly need it in other ways. Sooner or later, the world's problems affect all of us. Sooner or later, the glaring inequality between the rich and poor countries of the world will threaten world peace. Already, the world's problems can be solved only by international action. And we're all members of the same human race living on the same planet. Whatever its problems and difficulties, the U.N. is the only international body that we've got that can help us deal with the world's problems.

However, the United Nations is only as strong as we want to make it. It is not a world government. It is, rather, an association of the world's separate governments and can do only what they let it do. The governments of the world will take the U.N. seriously only if the world's people [in other words, people like you and me] take it seriously. And the first step towards this is to know something about the U.N. This does not mean taking on a massive research project [though that might not be a bad idea], but rather keeping our eyes and ears open for the information that is out there, in the media and elsewhere. And there is a lot of information available once we start looking — not in the big headlines and the sensational stories, but in small paragraphs here and there, in the back pages, in the form of passing references in stories that are mainly about something else, and so on. But the information is there. There could and should be more of it, bit there is already a lot of it available.

The articles that follow all appeared locally in the last few months and they give some idea of the wide variety of the activities of the United Nations. Remember, though, that for every activity they describe, there are literally thousands of others that go unreported. Probably no one person in the world, not even the Secretary-General of the U.N., can ever know all the different things the U.N. does around the world. Many of these things are small scale, at the level of a village or a small community. They are also successful, and so don't make the headlines. There isn't much "news" in the story that such and such a village now has a well that supplies clean water, or that a local school has textbooks for the first time, or that some U.N. soldier stopped someone from killing someone else. "News" usually means disaster and tragedy, not success and peace. Thus, the successes of the U.N. often pass unnoticed, while its failures and difficulties attract major attention.

Instructions

Your task is to read the articles on the following pages and to find as many examples as you can of things that the United Nations is doing or has done in the past around the world. As you read make notes [perhaps in a chart form], using these headings:

- **What?** [the event or activity or action involving the U.N.].
- **Where?** [whereabouts in the world, remembering that more than one place might be involved].
- **When?** [the time period or date].
- **Why?** [why the U.N. is doing whatever it is].
- **Results** [the result of the U.N. action].

If you cannot find the answer to every point, don't worry. Simply make your list as full as you can.You will probably find that some articles don't give you all the information you want, or that they raise more questions in your mind. This isn't a problem: just add another heading to your list. Call it:

- **Questions** [what I need/want to know or don't understand].

You could do all this on your own, or with a partner or small group [probably not more than three people in any one group, however]. Alternatively, with your teacher's help, your class might divide into groups, with each group taking a section of the articles. This will save time, but, if you do it, be sure to arrange for each group to report to the whole class, so that everyone gets all the information.

To help you out, here is a checklist of the key points to be found in the articles. Make sure that as a class you have covered them all. They are divided into headings to make things simpler, but the headings do not appear in the articles. Your job is to find out as much as you can about them from the articles.

U.N. Organization, Officials and Agencies

Security Council; Secretary General; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Court of Justice; World Bank; International Monetary Fund; UNICEF; International Civil Aviation Organization; World Health Organization; Food and Agriculture Organization; International Labour Organization; World Meteorological Organization; UNESCO; U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees; U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

U.N. Conferences, Reports and Related Activities

U.N. Population Conference; U.N. Voluntary Trust for Mineclearing Activities; Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty; U.N. Environment Programme; U.N. Population Fund; U.N. Children's Fund; U.N. World Food Programme; U.N. High Seas Conference; Fourth Conference on Women; U.N. Working Party on Contemporary Slavery; U.N. Climate Summit; Year of Tolerance; U.N. Conference on Crime; U.N. Conference on Mine Clearance; World Summit for Social Development; U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child; World Summit for Children; U.N. Development Programme; World Heritage Sites; Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal; U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda; Convention on Climate Change; Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission.

U.N. Involvement in Day to Day Events

Peacekeeping in Bosnia; peacekeeping in Haiti; peacekeeping in Croatia; peacekeeping in Rwanda; peacekeeping in Somalia; peacekeeping in Angola; election in Cambodia; justice reform in Rwanda; commission of inquiry in Burundi; earthquake in Afghanistan; virus in Zaire; Kurds in Northern Iraq; sanctions against Iraq; sanctions against Libya.

Once you have completed your lists and, as a class compared notes and put together as much information as you can, answer these questions on your own:

1. What was in these articles that you already knew?

2. What three things most interested you?

3. What three things most surprised you?

4. What three things do you need more information about to make sense of them?

Once you have answered these questions for yourself, share your answers with a partner [your teacher will divide you up]. Once you have done that, your teacher will ask some of you to share your ideas with the whole class, and will ask for other people's ideas in order to get some discussion going.

A Continuing Assignment

Now that you have done all this, here is a continuing assignment. Check the newspaper[s] regularly [your teacher will make sure there are copies available for class use] and clip out every mention you can find of the U.N. Post your clippings on the classroom bulletin board using a series of easy to read and conspicuous headings, such as Peacekeeping; Human Rights; Environment; Children; Social and Economic Development; and so on. Remember that you will probably need to add new headings from time to time. In addition, put up a large world map, and using coloured tapes or markers, show where the U.N. is involved around the world. The clipping and bulletin board tasks could be shared around the class, with two different students doing them week by week.

If you have access to a computer and to Internet, you will find an unbelievable collection of information on the U.N. and its activities. For details of how to access it, see Josh Gould's article in *The Manitoba Social Science Teacher*, 21 [4], April 1995: p.11. There should be a copy in your school.

The aim of all this is to make your classroom an up-to-date United Nations Information Centre. At the end of every week, take 15 to 30 minutes of class time and ask this question: what did we learn about the U.N. this week?

A Reminder

Now, turn to the articles. They can be read in any order you please. Remember that as you read each article you should be making notes or a chart using the headings provided above: What? Where? When? Why? Results? Questions?

Murray wants to see Winnipeg become UN world heritage city

WFP 4 July 1995

By Nick Martin
City Hall Reporter

COUN. GLEN Murray wants the United Nations to designate Winnipeg a world heritage city.

It's not that far-fetched, said Murray, who has pitched his proposal to the city's planning committee.

The key is that the Exchange District is an intact historical area that represents a Chicago-style turn-of-the-century character without contemporary intrusion. Most cities have too much modern construction among their heritage areas to qualify.

Quebec City's Lower Town and an older area of Savannah, Ga., are the only North American cities to receive heritage designation from the UN, said Murray (Fort Rouge).

Another 12 natural sites in Canada have also been designated, said Terry O'Grady, an Ottawa spokesman for UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Jessica Martin, duty manager at Quebec City's historic Chateau Frontenac hotel, said the designation is another positive step in the city's campaign to promote itself as a historical landmark.

"It's in all the promotional material. We really sell ourselves as the cradle of North America because we go back to 1608," Martin said.

Murray called the designation a way to put Winnipeg on the "world tourism map."

The civic committee recommended council go for it.

O'Grady said new applications are considered each December. The federal government has to endorse applications and make a pitch to a UN committee that designates heritage sites, O'Grady said.

And O'Grady said the boost to the city could be considerable.

Once a city is designated, UNESCO's World Heritage Centre in Paris includes it in its promotional material, which is distributed worldwide.

Nations may go to war over water, report warns

By Chris Morris
Canadian Press

WFP 8 Aug 95

WASHINGTON — SEVENTY per cent of the world's surface is water, yet it's becoming critically scarce.

The element that a few well-endowed countries like Canada take for granted is becoming the stuff over which wars may be fought.

Water will be to the 21st century what oil has been to the latter part of this old one.

And water is in crisis.

That's the essence of a World Bank report, released Sunday, on the state of the Earth's water supply.

"Many of the wars of this century were about oil, but wars of the next century will be over water," Ismail Serageldin, a vice-president at the World Bank, said in an interview.

The World Bank report states that some 80 countries with 40 per cent of the world's population are already experiencing water shortages that threaten agriculture, industry and health.

Serageldin said conflicts may arise in areas where important water sources, such as rivers and lakes, are shared by more than one country. He said 40 per cent of the world's population lives off water that crosses at least one political boundary.

Bribing a ruler? $5 million: UN

Reuter WFP 23 Aug 95

CAIRO — SOME heads of state can be bribed for about $5 million US, the United Nations says.

The secretariat of a UN conference on crime gave the figure in a background paper on official corruption, made available yesterday in advance of the conference.

The paper grades civil servants and politicians into four groups, ranging from senior officials to heads of state, and says that each grade costs about 10 times as much to bribe as the grade below.

"Five per cent of $100,000 may be interesting to a senior official below the top rank," it said. "Five per cent of $100 million may attract the serious attention of the head of state."

The paper says corrupt politicians prefer to solicit bribes on projects in which there is an early down payment and in which there is a level of technical complexity.

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Rwanda mission inspires pride

W.f.p. 8 May 1995

I AM writing to you from Kigali, Rwanda, where I am serving as a Canadian Forces officer on a six-month peacekeeping mission with the United Nations Assistance Mission In Rwanda (UNAMIR).

From this remote part of the world, we read with great interest media coverage of the Canadian Forces. I thought your readers should know about the outstanding work that fellow Canadians are doing here in Rwanda as we assist in rebuilding this war-torn nation.

We Canadians, along with the other countries serving in UNAMIR, assist with the building of bridges, human-rights investigations, supplying food and water across the country, improving the conditions of displaced persons, providing medical care, conducting military observer patrols and repairing roads. This is not news; it is what we are paid to do.

The untold stories and heroes include our soldiers such as Warrant Officer Roger Laurin, Master Warrant Officer Robert Lanteigne and Sgt. Gerald Hayward. Laurin acts as our barber. Each night, after a full day's work, he cuts hair and donates every penny to a local orphanage.

Lanteigne is leading a group of Canadian soldiers who, in their free time, repair electrical, plumbing and structural damage to six orphanages, in addition to building a playground for another orphanage.

Hayward organized a charity run which raised more than $2,000 that will go towards another orphanage.

Small gestures, perhaps, but they speak volumes of the good work that Canadians do here.

There are more than 120 Canadian Forces men and women serving with UNAMIR. We come from across Canada and range in rank from a young corporal, Lenora Collins, a reservist supply technician, to the most senior rank, Maj.-Gen. Guy Tousignant, who, as the UNAMIR force commander, commands the more than 6,000 United Nations troops in Rwanda.

I, for one, have never been so proud to serve both Canada and the United Nations, as a member of the Canadian Forces.

LIEUT. (N) KENT PAGE
Kigali, Rwanda

Feds defied labor rules: UN agency

Public-service wage freeze lashed

WFP 7 Avril 1995

By Gord McIntosh
Canadian Press

OTTAWA — THE federal government violated international labor standards by continuing to freeze wages of public servants, says a UN agency.

Ottawa's resolve to break the deficit does not warrant continued suspension of collective bargaining with its employees, the International Labor Organization said yesterday.

The Liberal decision last year to extend by two years what was started by the Tories in 1991 goes beyond any reasonable restriction a government can place on collective bargaining, it said.

"The action taken by the government in no sense corresponds to the fair and reasonable compromise required," the agency said in a ruling from Geneva.

"As this is the longest wage-restriction program ever adopted in Canada, it clearly goes beyond what the committee has considered to be permissible restrictions on collective bargaining."

The ruling is not binding on the government, even though Canada is an ILO member.

But Bob White, president of the Canadian Labor Congress, said it will be an embarrassment just the same to a government that takes its international affairs role seriously.

"If the cabinet and the prime minister don't care about that I guess all we can do is keep debating those issues," he said.

A complaint by the labor congress was originally aimed at legislation brought in by the Tory government of Brian Mulroney.

But it was the Liberals who had to defend the wage freeze before an ILO committee, and the UN body rejected the Liberals' argument.

The UN agency, a body financed by labor, business and government, made it clear the ruling was talking about both governments.

"The policy of the new authorities in this regard has mirrored that of their predecessors," it said.

But just as the Tories dismissed ILO objections to the wage freeze, this government did as well.

"This is not the first time this organization has given its comments on the matter," said Treasury Board president Art Eggleton.

Empowerment of women urged

UN report calls for fighting discrimination, subordination and early child-bearing

8 July 1995

BY JANE GADD
The Globe and Mail

The United Nations has fired a shot across the bows of the Vatican and other opponents of reproductive freedom who are expected to water down any declaration on the subject by the UN's conference on women this September.

The UN Population Fund uses its annual report on the state of the global population to make a strong plea for empowerment of women worldwide as the key to social and economic development, as well as to population growth rates that the world can accommodate.

"Women in most societies have many roles, but often only one, their role in reproduction, is recognized, and even in that they can expect little support," the report says.

"Too often, they have little or no voice in decisions made in or outside the household; and too often, even their reproductive health is ignored. These inequities must be redressed to fulfill women's human rights and enable countries to progress towards sustainable development," the report says.

The report calls for all forms of discrimination to be outlawed and traditional laws and practices that enforce women's subordination to be challenged. It also calls for the enactment and enforcement of laws setting a minimum age for marriage to protect young women from the dangers of early child-bearing and allow them to take advantage of options beyond motherhood.

On the issue of reproductive health, it stresses the importance of parents' ability to choose the number and spacing of their children.

"The ability to exercise choice in regard to fertility has a strong impact on women's reproductive health and allows them to participate in social, political and economic activities," the report says.

Citing World Bank figures, it says that one-third of the illnesses among girls and women aged 15 to 44 in developing countries is related to pregnancy, childbirth, abortion, HIV and reproductive tract infections.

Half a million women still die each year as a consequence of pregnancy and childbirth, and most of those deaths could be prevented, the report says. Maternal death rates are 15 to 50 times greater in the developing world than in most developed countries.

An estimated 67,000 women die each year from abortions performed in unsafe conditions.

The report also warns of a wave of adolescents becoming sexually active at a time when the interval between sexual maturity and marriage is growing because of better nutrition and the success of existing efforts to delay marriage.

Today, more than half of the world's population of 5.7 billion is below the age of 25. About one-third are between the ages of 10 and 24, and 80 per cent live in developing countries.

"All these young people have needs related to their physical and emotional development, particularly as they become aware of their sexuality," the report says.

"Education programs for youth in many countries . . . generally have a narrow focus on teen-age pregnancy. Family life education programs often promote 'responsible parenthood' within marriage and abstinence outside it; these programs frequently ignore gender relations, rarely provide information on sexual feelings, attitudes and behaviour, and seldom address contraceptive use."

In September, the international community meets in China for the UN's fourth annual conference on women. The participants will review and appraise the progress of women and adopt a platform of action emphasizing removal of obstacles to the advancement of women.

Last month, the Vatican fired its own salvo in preparation for a likely battle over reproductive freedom, stating that the UN conference should concentrate more on motherhood and less on sexual rights.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters that the Holy See believes it should not impose Western values on femininity.

He made it clear that while the Vatican supports women's rights, it is ready for a fight over issues of contraception, abortion and the nature of family.

UN keeps peace in Angola

Associated Press WP 9 Dec '95

UNITED NATIONS — The Security Council voted unanimously yesterday to send 7,000 peacekeepers to Angola to cement an agreement ending 19 years of civil war in the southern African country.

At the urging of the United States, the peacekeepers will be sent in stages to hold the rival sides to their peace promises and avoid entangling UN soldiers in any new large-scale fighting.

"This time peace has come to stay," Angolan Foreign Minister Venancio de Moura told the council before the vote. Portugal, Angola's former colonial ruler, and many African countries joined his plea for rapid deployment.

About 300 UN military observers and other peacekeepers are currently in Angola.

UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has called for full deployment within three months. But the Security Council said the full force cannot be sent until Boutros-Ghali reports the truce is holding.

The Security Council approved a six-month mandate for the peacekeeping force. It must vote on any extension.

Most troops would come from Brazil, India, Pakistan, Romania, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

Human rights are women's right: Part III

AI's major campaign this year is on the human rights of women. This is the third in a series of articles on the campaign. This time we focus on the Fourth UN World Conference on Women (September in Beijing). See pages 12-13 for campaign appeal cases.

by CHERYL HOTCHKISS

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women is to ensure equality, development, and peace for women and girl-children—more than half the world's population. Recently, however, attention has not been given to the substantive issues of the conference.

You have likely seen the headlines. "China unfair to UN forum on women's rights, Canada says." "Forum site might scuttle conference." The controversy began when Chinese officials suddenly relocated the meeting site of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) 40 kilometres away from where government delegates will be meeting in Beijing. The new NGO Forum site, where 36,000 participants are expected to gather, was much smaller and had few facilities. More importantly, its isolation made it more difficult for NGO representatives, such as the AI delegation, to have a direct impact on the main conference.

Representatives from a number of NGOs, governments, and the UN responded immediately to the Chinese decision. Amnesty lent its global voice with letters, faxes, and lobbying of a number of influential contacts. We also participated in a petition action launched by the International Women's Tribune Centre—indeed, the Tribune Centre has since made special mention of the thousands of petitions that came in from AI members worldwide. By early June, an NGO Forum organizer was able to announce that agreement had been reached over the site and that major concessions had been made by the China Organizing Committee.

Looking at the world through women's eyes

THE CONFERENCE in Beijing is the fourth in a series of UN conferences on women. The first was held in Mexico City in 1976, marking the beginning of the UN Decade of Women. The second took place in Copenhagen in 1980 when participants adopted a Program of Action. The third, hosted by Kenya in 1985, produced the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000.

The Beijing conference is also one of a wider series of UN global conferences taking place during the 1990s—others include the Earth Summit in 1992, the Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993, and the Social Summit this year. Governments are the main decision-makers at these conferences, but a number of NGOs, like AI, are given special standing and the possibility of participating directly in discussions.

Alongside each UN global conference is an NGO Forum, designed to pressure governments into genuine action, to exchange information and ideas, to strengthen cooperation, and to create publicity around the many concerns of participating organizations. This year's NGO Forum in Beijing (Aug 30-Sept 8), with its theme of "Look at the World Through Women's Eyes," will attract some 36,000 participants from about 2,800 non-governmental organizations working around the globe.

Amnesty International: The Activist
Aug/Sept 1995.

Stiff dues for world's clubs

WFP 29 Aug 1995

Canadian Press

TORONTO — CANADA plans to spend nearly $217 million this fiscal year on membership fees for international organizations, the Toronto Star reports.

Documents obtained under access-to-information laws list fees for 37 bodies in which Canada is a member — from the United Nations to the International Tropical Timber Organization.

The UN fee is $49.3 million, not including costs for peacekeeping. And there are separate fees for UN agencies: $18.2 million for the World Health Organization, $15.7 million for the UN Educational and Cultural Organization and $16.7 million for the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The smallest fee — $10,000 — is for the Canadian Council on International Law.

Land-mines a horror, Canada tells meeting

By Lisa Schlein
Canadian Press

WFP 6 July 1995

GENEVA — LAND-MINES cause untold suffering, impede the development of war-torn societies and should be banned around the world, Canadian delegate Andrew McAlister told a UN conference on mine clearance yesterday.

The United Nations is trying to put an end to the use of mines which each year kill and maim an estimated 30,000 people. Thirty per cent of the victims are children.

"We must eliminate land-mines once and for all," UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the International Conference on Mine Clearance. "We must ban their use. We must ban their production. We must destroy those that are stockpiled."

But the U.S. delegation said that while Washington supports the eventual elimination of land-mines, an outright ban is politically and militarily still impossible.

The three-day conference hopes to raise more than $100 million Cdn for de-mining projects. Up to 110 million mines are believed to be scattered through 65 countries.

McAlister said that "despite the growing international awareness of the horrors of anti-personnel land-mines, their production and sale continue."

While land-mines are manufactured in 50 countries and exported by 35, Canada stopped exporting them in 1987 and hasn't manufactured them since 1992.

The international community, however, appears to be fighting a losing battle.

Last year, the UN said at least two million new mines were laid while only 100,000 were removed.

Canada yesterday pledged an initial contribution of $200,000 to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Mine Clearing Activities. The United States promised $17 million, the European Union $5.5 million and France $500,000.

Pope sends message in support of women

WFP 26 June 1995.

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Saying women deserve a "culture of equality," Pope John Paul insisted yesterday the Roman Catholic Church is a leading force against sexual discrimination and oppression.

The statements were part of Vatican efforts to stake out a moral platform in advance of a UN conference on women in September. A Vatican delegation, possibly led by a woman, plans to demand a statement denouncing violence against women.

The pontiff has described the Beijing meeting as a milestone in the future of humanity. Similar words were used last year before a UN population conference in Egypt, when the Vatican successfully battled to block approval of a statement encouraging expanded abortion rights.

Yesterday, the Pope depicted the Church as a vanguard for the "dignity of women," noting biblical passages that describe the sexes as equal in God's eyes. But he made no mention of the Church's ban on birth control or refusal to allow women clergy.

He said women have suffered under a "heritage of profound discrimination."

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Marine facts and figures

The Globe and Mail 25 March '95

Following are some facts and figures contained in a report called The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, released this month. The study was conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

- Total world catch of fish and seafood was 101.3 million tonnes in 1993, including 17 million tonnes of freshwater fish. Almost 16 million tonnes, some freshwater and some marine, were produced in farms.
- The anchovy was the most-caught species, accounting for 8.3 million tonnes, or 10 per cent, of the marine catch. Carp was the most-farmed fish.
- Humans ate 72.3 million tonnes of fish in 1993. Of that, 27.5 million tonnes were fresh, 23.5 million frozen, 12.2 million canned and 9 million cured.
- Twenty countries caught 80 per cent of the marine total, led by China with 10.1 million tonnes, or 12 per cent. Spain was No. 16, with 1.3 million tonnes, and Canada was No. 18, with 1.1 million tonnes.
- Catch by all non-local boats — such as Spanish boats off Eastern Canada — was 4.7 million tonnes in 1993, down from a peak of 9.1 million tonnes in 1989. Japan topped the catch for distant-water fleets, followed by Russia, Spain, other former Soviet republics and South Korea.

Sticking in Bosnia

WFP 3 April 1995

In March, a United Nations official commented that there was no hope of peace in the former Yugoslavia. Shortly afterwards, the head of the UN operations in the Balkans, Yasushi Akashi, warned that the renewed fighting in Bosnia threatened to reach an unprecedented scale. On that same day the Canadian government renewed its commitment of troops to the UN peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Croatia for another six months.

It has been apparent for a long time that there is no peace to keep in Bosnia, nor is there likely to be until the war between the Serbs and the Bosnian Muslims produces a clear winner. It is clear now too that the situation in Croatia will soon become more difficult, more explosive and much more dangerous for the Canadians assigned to the UN there.

That being the case, Canada might well have chosen not to commit to another term in the Balkans. This country could have withdrawn honorably. The terms of engagement are changing and there is very little chance of the situation improving in six months. Canadian troops have served bravely and with distinction in the Balkans since the UN intervened there.

Although the situation in the ruins of Yugoslavia may be hopeless, the part played by the UN there is not pointless. The peacekeepers, Canadians prominent among them, have played an important humanitarian role in providing aid and relief and, occasionally, even in separating one of the warring factions from another. Ottawa was right in deciding to continue to play that role for a limited time, and it was right to warn that it will now reassess the Canadian position.

The UN at the same time will be reassessing the entire concept of peacekeeping in this new and more fractious world order. It will have to rethink its basic purpose, its abilities and what mandate it will seek in the problem spots that exist now and that will arise in the future. Failures and frustrations in the Balkans, in Somalia and Rwanda give some urgency to that task. Canada, as a participant in all three and a leader among the world's peacekeepers, is uniquely positioned to advise on what that new role should be.

$23 million program aims to give Rwanda new justice system

UN project an attempt to ensure fair trials for 20,000 people accused in genocide

Globe and mail 23 march '95

Reuters News Agency

GENEVA — The United Nations unveiled a $23-million (U.S.) program yesterday to rebuild Rwanda's shattered justice system and help give fair trials to 20,000 people accused of taking part in last year's genocide.

Jose Ayala-Lasso, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, is due to present the two-year project to the Rwandan government in Kigali on March 31, UN officials said.

Rwanda's justice system was shattered during the civil war from April to July, in which between half a million and one million people were killed. UN officials say the victims were mainly members of the Tutsi minority and moderate members of the Hutu majority of the Central African country.

Without a functioning justice system in Rwanda, the more than two million refugees who fled to four neighbouring states will not return voluntarily, the UN document said.

The UN technical assistance program announced yesterday will provide human-rights training to judges and prison officials, and will also pay to rehabilitate court buildings and overcrowded prisons.

"This comprehensive program of technical assistance in human rights aims at a two-year-long intensive assistance effort to break the ideology of genocide and to rehabilitate the justice system in Rwanda," the UN document said.

"The successful implementation of the program will assist the justice system in Rwanda to adequately and fairly deal with those accused of the genocide," it added.

The UN document said that "almost all" of the 20,000 people suspected of involvement in the killings had been arrested "in a manner that does not conform to Rwandese law."

"This is very problematic, for this means almost all arrests and detentions have been arbitrary," it said.

A UN inquiry commission, made up of a three-member panel of African jurists, said in December that an estimated 500,000 unarmed civilians had been murdered and that some reliable estimates put the number at nearly a million.

Rwanda's government administration was left in chaos after the genocide, with many officials and investigators killed and most of its vehicles and typewriters either stolen or destroyed.

Rwanda has just 26 judicial police inspectors, while a force of 750 will be needed to investigate the killings efficiently, the UN said. But it said a team of 250 was likely in 1995.

The justice ministry, charged with investigating and bringing to justice perpetrators of the genocide, had just one vehicle until the beginning of 1995 for the entire country.

The program will finance the purchase of pickup trucks, motorcycles and bicycles, fuel, office supplies, cameras and fingerprinting equipment for each of the 11 prefectures.

It relies on donor nations lending the services of 50 legal professionals, including investigators, prosecutors, judges and defence lawyers, to work in Rwanda for one year.

UN officials said no formal appeal had been launched but the UN human-rights centre was to begin actively seeking contributions from major donor nations.

The plan assumes donor countries will fully finance a separate UN human-rights monitoring operation, which officials have said might have to be closed by May for lack of money.

The mission, which has 115 monitors on the ground trying to promote tolerance, currently costs $700,000 a month.

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Natives propose cleanup of lakes

Canadian Press WFP 18 July 95

UNITED NATIONS — A confederacy of aboriginal peoples presented the United Nations yesterday with a $700-million US plan to clean up pollution in the eastern Great Lakes region.

The proposal by the Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois Six Nations Confederacy, calls for money for education, research, monitoring and other purposes. It hopes to get funds from UN agencies and the private sector.

The plan was presented at a meeting sponsored by the UN Environment Program as a followup to the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. That conference called for indigenous groups to take a leading role in protecting the environment.

Environmentalists say pollution around the Great Lakes has harmed fish, livestock and crops.

The confederacy said the environment is also threatened by "cross-border midnight dumpings and efforts to dispose of wastes on reservations to circumvent environmental laws of surrounding states and provinces."

The confederacy said "the restoration of damaged elements of the eco-systems on native territories must be a co-operative effort between industry, government and the affected nations."

The Six Nations group called for collecting data based on Canada's EAGLE, or Effects to Aboriginals from the Great Lake Environment, a five-year project supported by Health and Welfare Canada.

Many of the confederacy's proposals involve setting up an infrastructure for dealing with environmental problems instead of specific cleanup projects.

Among the confederacy's projects would be a $350-million Centre of Excellence for Environmental Research and Education on Lake Onondaga in New York state.

At a UN news conference, Chief Oren Lyons, faithkeeper of the Onondaga Nation in New York state, warned that pollution is endangering future generations.

Cracks in protective casing stir worries at Chernobyl

WPP April 8, 1995

Associated Press

KIEV — THE concrete sarcophagus encasing the wrecked reactor at Chernobyl is deteriorating, threatening another release of radioactivity.

Ukraine, which is seeking billions in aid to clean up the reactor that exploded in 1986, warns that water dripping into the ruins could set off another uncontrolled reaction and spread radiation over a wide area of Europe.

But the UN atomic energy agency plays down that threat, saying the danger is limited to radioactive dust getting out and contaminating the local area around the power plant.

Ukrainian and western scientists have worried for years about a growing number of cracks and holes in the sarcophagus put up around the damaged No. 4 reactor. They say radioactive dust could escape through the cracks.

But the crusted, lava-like fuel is also developing cracks, and Ukrainian scientists say that increases the danger. They say rain and melting snow that drip through the sarcophagus to the warm fuel mass could cause fission of uranium atoms, causing a vapor explosion that could burst the sarcophagus.

"Water getting inside the fuel mass . . . might lead to a spontaneous and uncontrollable nuclear chain reaction," Boris Gorbachev, one of those responsible for monitoring the sarcophagus' safety, wrote in the newspaper Vse-Ukrainskiye Vedomosti.

David Kyd, a spokesman for the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, Austria, said the UN agency considered an explosion unlikely but is concerned about radioactive dust filtering out of the sarcophagus.

■ Madrid filed a case against Canada in the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Tobin dismissed the move as futile, saying the turbot could be gone by the time the court rules. Canada has already said it would not recognize the court's ruling in the dispute. WPP 29 March 95

NAIROBI — THE United Nations shut down Kenya's biggest refugee camp yesterday, a move officials said heralded the success of a four-month repatriation program, designed to lure Somalis back to their war-shattered country.

Peter Kessler, a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said in a statement the camp at Utahge near the coastal city of Mombasa was handed over to Kenyan authorities. He called it "a sign of new opportunities for Somali refugees sheltered in Kenya." WPP 11 April 95

U.N. Let Two Americans Cross Border to Iraq

N.Y. Times 7 April 1995

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — The United Nations commander for the Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission acknowledged today that the two Americans in prison in Iraq for crossing the border illegally were mistakenly allowed to enter by United Nations border guards.

In an Associated Press Television interview, the commander of the Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission, Lieut. Gen. Krishna N. S. Thapa of Nepal, said that a guard let David Daliberti and William Barloon pass on March 13, thinking they were authorized personnel.

Mr. Daliberti, 41, of Jacksonville, Fla., and Mr. Barloon, 39, of Hampton, Iowa, who were employed as aircraft mechanics by American firms in Kuwait, are serving eight-year prison sentences for entering Iraq illegally.

"They were riding in a white Pajero which very much resembles the Toyota Landcruiser we use for patrol, and it was dark," Mr. Thapa said in the interview at the Umm Qasr border post. "When they came close to him they waved him with their ID cards and he just opened the gate," he said, referring to the officer who let them through.

Frightened Kurds

ZAKHO, Iraq — Kurdish refugees, frightened by the Turkish army's massive offensive against Kurds in northern Iraq, camped on the doorstep of a UN compound yesterday and demanded protection.

The 177 men, women and children parked a minibus and 10 trucks, one of them full of sheep, and set up camp on a soccer field on a promise the United Nations would escort them to safety by tomorrow, along with other refugees.

WPP 29 March 1995

UN relief workers trek to Afghan landslide site

WPP 3 April 1995

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN — UN relief workers set out on horseback to help victims of a landslide that is reported to have killed as many as 350 people in a remote corner of northeastern Afghanistan.

UN officials said yesterday that relief workers carrying a small supply of emergency medicine left the Badakhshan provincial capital of Faizabad on Saturday for the two-day journey to the landslide site.

A giant chunk of the Pamir Mountain range rumbled down on the small village of Qara Luk about a week ago, burying almost all of its inhabitants, Radio Kabul reported Saturday.

The state-run radio blamed the landslide on two weeks of heavy rain and snowfalls.

Survivors walked 50 kilometres across snow-clogged mountain paths and rain-soaked roads to Faizabad. It took almost a week for news of the landslide to arrive there.

Alex Thier, UN field officer in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, said he couldn't confirm the reported death toll until the team arrives at the scene and reports back.

Iraq rejects UN oil plan

WPP 16 April 1995

Reuters

Proceeds from sales would be used for humanitarian purposes

BAGHDAD — Iraq will reject a United Nations plan for Baghdad to sell $2 billion US worth of oil for humanitarian purposes, parliamentary Speaker Saadi Mehdi Saleh said yesterday.

"The voice of the masses expresses the Iraqi attitude . . . it is the rejection of this unfair resolution," Saleh said at an anti-American demonstration in the heart of the capital Baghdad.

His remarks were the clearest rejection by Iraqi officials of the plan, which was adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council Friday and immediately condemned by Iraqi leaders.

Western diplomats in Baghdad expected a rejection after Iraqi leaders issued a statement condemning the resolution as a violation of sovereignty after a joint meeting Friday of the Revolutionary Command Council and the governing Baath party headed by President Saddam Hussein.

"We believe the Security Council has to respect its own resolutions, 687 and paragraph 22," Saleh said at the rally, where about 5,000 Iraqis shouted slogans against the proposal.

UN Security Council resolution 687, passed after Iraq invaded Kuwait, specified trade sanctions. Paragraph 22 linked the lifting of an oil embargo with the dismantling of Iraqi programs to build weapons of mass destruction.

UN inspector Rolf Ekeus said last week there are still doubts over Iraq's biological weapons programs. Iraq has dismissed this as part of a U.S.-led political conspiracy.

Saleh said Iraq also rejected the terms under which humanitarian supplies to its people would be monitored, and objected to funds from its oil sales being directed to autonomous Kurdish areas in northern Iraq.

The resolution supersedes an earlier 1991 motion, which Iraq has consistently rejected on much the same grounds.

It would allow Iraq to sell up to $2 billion of oil over 180 days, renewable for another six months.

Out of each $1 billion worth of oil sold, between $650 million and $680 million would go to buy humanitarian supplies but between $130 million and $150 million of this would be directly earmarked for a UN program to assist the Kurds of northern Iraq, now subjected to a government blockade.

Another $300 million would be creamed off the top of each $1 billion for a UN Gulf War reparations fund. The balance would meet other UN costs stemming from the war.

The sanctions have brought the oil-rich country of 18 million people to its knees. Aid workers say millions of Iraqis now depend on handouts, and a shortage of hard currency has meant government imports of basic commodities plummeted last year.

The UN resolution emerged as a compromise between U.S. and Britain and other members such as France and Russia who favored lifting the oil embargo altogether once Iraq met UN resolutions on disarmament.

Life in violence-torn Burundi 'like quicksand': UN official

WPP 30 march '95

By Terry Leonard
Associated Press

BUJUMBURA, Burundi — Burundi is a country on the run. Refugees escaping violence outnumber residents in the capital — and its second-largest city is now a camp populated by Rwandans.

Life in the central African country is "a little like quicksand," said Frances Turner, the head of the UN Children's Fund in Burundi.

"What appears to be, isn't. You have to anticipate not just the unexpected, but the unimaginable."

A recent UNICEF study of 2,769 of the more than 14,000 children made orphans by ethnic killings since October 1993 found 58 per cent had been attacked themselves. It said 77 per cent of those children knew their attackers, and in nearly 81 per cent of those cases, the assailant was a neighbor.

Ethnic violence between the majority Hutus and minority Tutsis promotes the ambitions of extremist political parties and individual politicians intent on taking power.

Memories of massacres

The lessons of the genocide of more than 500,000 people last year in Rwanda seem to be lost on Burundi because memories of its own past massacres.

"It's seared into the soul of every Burundian," said Turner. "Every Hutu cannot forget 1972. Every Tutsi cannot forget 1993."

More than 100,000 people were killed in 1972 in massacres that followed a Hutu coup attempt. An estimated 100,000 people were killed in 1993 after a coup attempt by elements of the overwhelmingly Tutsi military.

Because the balance of power is different in Burundi than in Rwanda, aid workers and UN officials don't expect killings on a Rwandan scale. But none rules out the possibility.

Burundi's coalition government, forged under terms of a power-sharing agreement last year, is too fractious to govern. Since the beginning of the year, the main Tutsi opposition party has forced the resignations of the speaker of the National Assembly and the prime minister.

Diplomats contend the weekend fighting, which involved the army, underscored the inability of the Hutu president to control the military.

Burundi, they say, is now a country governed by thugs and gangs.

Members of the Tutsi extremist militia Sans Echec, which means "without failure," kill Hutu civilians in once-mixed neighborhoods of the capital. In the neighborhoods of Bwiza and Buyenzi, where the violence flared last weekend, militiamen roam unchallenged. Diplomats said the soldiers often act together with the militia.

The charred homes of Hutus and lines of refugees marching around the top of Lake Tanganyika to safe haven in Zaire are reminders of political failure.

The extremist Hutu militia Intagohekas — "those who never sleep" — have chased many Tutsis from the hills in the predominantly Hutu countryside.

Happy landings

MONTREAL — The international aviation community has committed itself to an emerging technology that improves the ability of planes to land in bad weather.

The International Civil Aviation Organization issued recommendations yesterday that will eventually lead to the high-tech landing system becoming the worldwide standard for precision approach and landing systems.

Its U.S. developers say the technology, known as global navigation satellite system, allows planes to land with pinpoint accuracy, even in thick fog.

Libyans drum protest

TRIPOLI, Libya — Protesters pounded drums outside the UN office, newspapers bitterly attacked the United States and Libyan leader Col. Moammar Gadhafi exhorted his countrymen to be steadfast before UN sanctions.

Whipping up popular rage is part of Gadhafi's plan to defy a UN air travel ban by flying pilgrims to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, this week. He regularly uses the annual Muslim pilgrimage to dramatize Libya's anger at the sanctions.

100,000 flee

KIBEHO, RWANDA — Rwandan troops searched a camp for the displaced in southwest Rwanda yesterday, prompting an estimated 100,000 people to flee their huts, witnesses said.

UN officials said heavily armed troops of the Tutsi-led government were apparently engaged in an intense "cordon and search" operation of Kibeho camp but there were no immediate reports of any casualties.

Mass killings

GENEVA — Sixty-two people, mostly women and children, were killed by machete-wielding men in an attack on a village in Liberia, the UN Children's Fund said yesterday.

UNICEF spokesman Damien Personnaz said the mass killings occurred April 9 in the central village of Yosi. He said details were only now emerging from survivors who made it to a hospital in Buchanan, about 95 kilometres southeast of Monrovia, the capital.

Fund set up

WASHINGTON — The World Bank has set up a new $200-million program to deliver loans to the world's poorest people, in developing countries, with Canada contributing $750,000 Cdn over three years. The idea is to encourage small businesses.

I APPLAUD Lindor Reynolds' column of April 4 on poverty. Too few people in this privileged country we live in have looked poverty in the face as Reynolds did on her recent trip to Mexico.

The world is often desensitized to poverty, which is portrayed as a statistic. The facts and figures tell us 35,000 children die every day from malnutrition and related diseases. The reality of poverty is in the faces of the mother and child Reynolds met begging on that street in Mexico.

UNICEF helps mothers and children like the ones who gave Reynolds and her daughter an unexpected look at real life for the poor. Even the smallest donation to UNICEF can go a long way.

If travellers have leftover foreign currency, that, too, can be put to good use by UNICEF. Let's hope her column will be a catalyst to help many more mothers and children.

MARGARET KONIUCK-PETZOLD
Winnipeg

Major honored

OTTAWA — Maj. Andre Rioux of Beloeil, Que., has been awarded the Meritorious Service Cross for cool behavior under fire during a peacekeeping mission in Angola in 1992.

Rioux was serving with a UN mission in the African country when the headquarters in which he worked came under fire in a battle between warring factions.

Polio withering away on its deathbed, will be gone by 2000, WHO officials say

Reuter

GENEVA — THE World Health Organization yesterday reported a drastic reduction in the number of polio cases worldwide and said it's on course to eradicate the disease entirely by the year 2000.

In figures released to mark World Health Day today — its theme this year is A World Without Polio — the UN agency said reported cases of the crippling childhood disease dropped to 6,241 in 1994.

Although the actual number of infections is reckoned to be at least 10 times that, the WHO said the figure represented an 82 per cent reduction from the number of cases reported when WHO member states set the eradication target seven years ago.

"In 1988 the World Health Assembly in effect issued a death warrant for a disease, poliomyelitis," Ralph Henderson, the WHO's assistant director general, told a news conference.

"We are now midway towards carrying out that death sentence."

Some 70 countries are still affected by polio, especially in Asia and West and Central Africa. India accounts for half of all cases.

The WHO says almost 2,000 children a week are paralysed by the disease and a new case occurs every six minutes on average.

But of the 214 countries and territories that report to the WHO, 145 said they had no cases of polio last year. Ukraine, Mongolia and Sri Lanka were among those countries from which polio was absent for the first time.

12 million die before age of five

Child deaths tied to poverty

UPP 2 may 1995

Reuter

GENEVA — THE World Health Organization, in a report it described as "a devastating portrait of our times," said today that 12 million children die every year in developing countries before they reach the age of five.

Most of the deaths, equal to the combined populations of Norway and Sweden, are from diseases like pneumonia, diarrhea, measles and malaria, which could be prevented if more resources were available.

Combating the extreme poverty in which more than one in five people around the world lives is the key to improving health and lengthening life expectancy in the Third World, WHO said.

It called on governments to step up the war on deadly childhood ailments as well as infectious and parasitic diseases that kill millions of adults.

The World Health Report 1995 — Bridging the Gaps, was presented to officials from 190 WHO member states gathered in Geneva for the United Nations body's annual assembly.

"Poverty is the main reason why babies are not vaccinated, why clean water and sanitation are not provided, why curative drugs and other treatments are unavailable and why mothers die in childbirth," the report said.

"But today the money that some developing countries have to spend per person on health care over an entire year is just $4 (US), less than the amount of small change carried in the pockets and purses of many people in developed countries."

Hiroshi Nakajima, WHO director-general, said the survey painted a "devastating portrait of our times."

Nakajima: 'devastating'

"More than 200 million children —almost a third of all the children in the world — are undernourished," WHO said. "Malnutrition contributes substantially to childhood disease and death but often goes unrecognized as such."

The report, the first in what is to be an annual survey by the Geneva-based agency, highlights stark examples of growing inequity in access to basic health care.

"A short air trip between Florida in the United States and Haiti represents a life expectancy gap of more than 19 years," the report said.

The report was also released in Washington, where Dr. David Brandling-Bennett, deputy director of the Pan American Health Organization, said the major health problems in Canada and the United States are chronic diseases: heart disease, lung disease, diabetes and cancer.

He said the leading health issue in the industrialized countries, where people tend to live to ripe old ages, is how to keep older people healthy and happy. "That's the big challenge for countries like Canada."

Organ removal

GENEVA — China has denied allegations that its penal authorities remove organs from executed criminals without their consent.

In testimony before a United Nations working party on contemporary forms of slavery late Wednesday, a Chinese official also maintained that the country has no political prisoners.

CAMBODIA / *With the UN operation over, corruption and intolerance again pose a threat to freedom and human rights*

Dark clouds stain dawn of democracy

Globe e mail 18 April 1995

BY JOHN STACKHOUSE
Development Issues Reporter
Phnom Penh

A YEAR after the withdrawal of the biggest and costliest United Nations operation ever, Cambodia's dawn of democracy has turned into a morning storm of corruption and intolerance, raising concern among Khmers and foreigners alike that the impoverished country may slide back to its former authoritarian state.

In recent months, the Cambodian government has stepped up control of journalists, threatened outspoken politicians and asked the UN to close its centre for human rights in Phnom Penh. "Despite real progress in certain areas, true democracy is far from being achieved in Cambodia," said Pung Chhiv Kek Galabru, president of the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights.

"The law is the law, but everything is subject to negotiation," she said.

The UN pulled out of Cambodia, a largely agrarian country of seven million people, in March of 1994, almost one year after it supervised an election in which more than 90 per cent of eligible voters cast ballots. Since then, the Cambodian spring that saw human-rights groups and newspapers popping up on almost every street corner has turned blustery.

"I don't think there is a real democracy here," the head of one international agency in Phnom Penh said. "It's the same old game: patron-client relations, feudalism, warlords, gravy."

In January, the government seized two newspapers and arrested an editor for running derogatory cartoons of the co-prime ministers, Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen. It is now considering a new law that would make libel a criminal offence.

Last September, a newspaper editor who had published accounts of official corruption was gunned down on a busy street in the capital.

UN takes over from U.S., Haiti declares holiday

Reuters-CP WFP 31/3/95

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Haiti has declared a national holiday today to mark the day the United Nations takes over peacekeeping duties from a U.S.-led force.

By yesterday, the presidential palace had been repainted, streets in the capital were repaved for the first time in years and bleachers were up for spectators and bands.

United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, U.S. President Clinton and Defence Minister David Collenette were among those scheduled to attend.

Collenette plans to meet Canadian peacekeepers who recently arrived in Haiti. He also wants to meet President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to discuss the country's future.

A U.S.-led multinational force has occupied the Caribbean country since Sept. 19, 1994.

Today, military power will be handed over to a 6,000-member UN force, with soldiers from 18 countries, including 300 from Canada.

Outbreak in Zaire may be deadly Ebola

Doctors, nurses said fleeing hospitals

New York Times Service

NEW YORK — Scientists have found preliminary evidence that the Ebola virus, one of the deadliest infectious agents known, is the cause of a mysterious disease that has broken out in Zaire, officials of the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said yesterday.

The disease has killed at least 59 people in Zaire, and health officials fear that panic may be aggravating the situation there. Perhaps as many as 300 patients, doctors, nurses and other health care workers have fled hospitals in the affected areas, said Dr. Ralph Henderson, an assistant director-general of WHO, a United Nations agency in Geneva.

It is not known how many of those fleeing may be infected with the virus.

An announcement of the preliminary laboratory findings, which were made at the Centers for Disease Control headquarters in Atlanta, is to be made in Zaire this morning, said Dr. James Hughes, an official of the U.S. agency.

Ebola is one of a family of viruses that cause high fever and severe bleeding, and it is one of the new and emerging infectious agents that leading experts have warned could cause outbreaks unexpectedly anywhere in the world.

The Ebola virus was discovered in Zaire in 1976, where it killed 90 per cent of the nearly 600 people who were infected there, and in the Sudan.

It caused another outbreak in the Sudan in 1979, again killing 90 per cent of the victims. There is no specific treatment or vaccine to prevent it, although general hygienic and medical precautions can help curtail its spread.

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UN summit on global warming bogs down on voting procedures

W.F.P. 29 March '95

AP-CP-Reuter

BERLIN — ON the first day of a UN conference intended to slow global warming it was already apparent just how difficult that would be.

Even before the meeting began yesterday, it bogged down over a procedural question that highlighted some participants' opposition to regulations controlling greenhouse gas emissions.

Oil-producing countries, fearful the regulations would hurt them economically, called for each country to have veto power. Other participants called for a majority-rule system.

The debate delayed the start of the conference by an hour, and after a day of meetings there was still no solution in sight.

But Saudi Arabia, which spearheaded the protest from oil-producing countries, later agreed in private talks with German Environment Minister Angela Merkel, to set the matter aside for now and let the conference proceed.

The meeting of 130 countries is a follow-up to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. There, delegates adopted the Convention on Climate Change, which says industrialized countries must reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels by 2000.

Few of the 127 countries that have ratified the accord can tell the Berlin conference that they can meet the goal.

Burned fossil fuels account for much of the man-made carbon dioxide responsible for steadily warming the atmosphere.

An organization of small island states, backed by host country Germany, is asking delegates to commit to the goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions 20 per cent by 2005. These countries fear flooding if global warming makes sea levels rise.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other oil producers say that could devastate their economies by cutting off their source of income.

They got support from the United MineWorkers of America, the U.S. union that circulated a statement yesterday urging delegates to reject "tough targets and timetables" until "essential scientific uncertainties are resolved."

A UN climate expert told the meeting yesterday that scientific evidence, while not conclusive, had convinced him of the need to take action soon. G.O.P. Obasi, head of the World Meteorological Organization, said he based his assessment on "an increasing number of extreme weather-related disasters."

The Philippines had 32 typhoons in 1993, compared with an annual average of 19, and Hurricane Andrew in 1992 was the "hurricane of the century," Obasi said.

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Countries clash over method of improving nuclear arms pact

Reuter WFP 9 May 1995

UNITED NATIONS — The world's nuclear powers clashed with other countries yesterday over how to make a treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons more effective.

Most countries are convinced the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty continues to have a vital role in the post-Cold War world, making it certain a UN conference on the issue which ends Friday will agree to make the treaty permanent.

But a group of developing countries led by Indonesia is pressing the five declared nuclear powers — the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain — to give stronger commitments on nuclear disarmament and other issues.

As diplomats continued the debate behind closed doors at UN headquarters, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said he still hoped for a compromise that would take into account the concerns of many developing countries.

But he acknowledged a majority of the 178 countries that have signed the treaty back an indefinite extension, meaning it would likely pass.

"Of course they will win; the votes are there," Alatas told reporters. "We do not want to destroy the NPT but we want to improve on it."

Extension

Indonesia has led a proposal to extend the treaty, which must be renewed now that it has run for 25 years, by fixed periods of 25 years at a time. Only about a dozen states, including Iran and North Korea, have publicly backed the idea.

The United States and others argue this would encourage more states to develop nuclear arms. They point to Iraq's nuclear program, discovered after the 1991 Gulf War, and to the current crisis over North Korea as proof that the treaty should be made permanent to meet the growing danger of proliferation in the post-Cold War world.

South Africa, the only country to build a secret arsenal of nuclear weapons and then dismantle them, has also proposed more regular and stringent reviews as a possible compromise.

Bosnian Serb will stand trial on murder, rape, torture charges

WFP 27 April 1995

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The Yugoslav war crimes tribunal got its first defendant yesterday, three years after the Bosnian civil war began and nearly half a century after the last international war crimes court.

Sitting behind bulletproof glass, Bosnian Serb Dusan Tadic pleaded not guilty to charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, murder and rape — the first time rape has ever been tried as a war crime.

The former bar owner and karate instructor faces trial this summer before a three-judge panel. The court was created in November 1993 by the UN Security Council.

Unlike the Tokyo and Nuremberg tribunals set up by the victorious Second World War allies, the Yugoslav tribunal is trying to mete out justice in a conflict that shows little sign of ending.

At least 200,000 people have died in the war, which began in 1992 when Bosnian Serbs rebelled at the Muslim-led government's decision to secede from Yugoslavia.

On Monday, the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Richard Goldstone of South Africa, named Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his army commander, Ratko Mladic, as war crimes suspects.

But the Serbs have rejected the tribunal's authority and refused to surrender suspects, making it unlikely the court will get its hands on any big names.

Yesterday's preliminary hearing drew criticism from the Bosnian Serb "Ministry of Information," which called it a biased attempt to deny Serbs their "legitimate right to self-determination."

No trial date was set for Tadic.

There are three judges: Jules Deschenes, former chairman of an inquiry on war criminals in Canada; Lal Vohrah, a former Malaysian High Court judge; and presiding Judge Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, a former U.S. federal judge from Texas.

Tadic is charged with 13 murders, one rape and numerous instances of cruelty and torture in Serb-controlled Bosnia in the summer of 1992. He was arrested in Germany last year after being identified by Bosnian refugees there.

At the last international war crimes tribunal, in Tokyo in 1948, seven of Japan's wartime leaders were sentenced to death and hanged. Sixteen were jailed for life.

Two years earlier, Nuremberg's tribunal for Nazi war crimes sentenced 12 of its 24 suspects to death and three to life in prison. Most of the Nazi leadership, including Adolf Hitler, committed suicide before trials.

18

Canada's men live in No. 1 country, women in No. 9: UN

WFP August 17, 1995

By Dianne Rinehart
Canadian Press

OTTAWA — CANADA is the best country in the world to live in 1995 — unless you're a woman.

Then it's the ninth best, according to the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index released yesterday.

That index — which ranks countries by combining life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income of the population — places Canada on top of the list for the third time in the last four years.

This year Canada ranked marginally above the United States and Japan — which broke Canada's winning streak in 1993.

But when the human development index was adjusted for inequality between men and women in education, literacy and income, the top three slid down the list slightly.

The Gender-related Development Index ranked Sweden No. 1, followed by Finland, Norway and Denmark. The U.S. ranked fifth, Japan eighth and Canada came in ninth.

When the index is adjusted for inequality between women and men in economic and political decision-making, Canada rises again to fifth place behind Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark.

The U.S. drops to eighth and Japan plummets to 27th behind countries with nowhere near the economic might such as Trinidad, Cuba, Bulgaria, Costa Rica and China.

The human development index has long been used in federalist political speeches to emphasize why Quebec shouldn't separate.

The Parti Quebecois, anticipating another round of speeches about how Canada is No. 1, spent $6,500 in May for a study which argues the human development index is a "fairly crude instrument."

The UN report says there is no society in which women fare as well as men.

Wrangle to extend treaty on non-proliferation starts

'No more testing; no more production,' UN secretary general pleads

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — UN members gathered yesterday to open a month-long debate over renewing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the centrepiece of global arms control.

The United States and other nuclear powers want an indefinite and unconditional extension of the 25-year-old treaty, designed to block the spread of atomic weapons.

But some in the Third World prefer only a limited extension and want to attach conditions, such as greater progress in reducing nuclear arsenals.

Addresses by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and U.S. State Secretary Warren Christopher topped the first day's agenda, along with remarks by Hans Blix, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which administers the treaty. Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Andre Ouellet is to speak today.

Principal flaw

The IAEA is taking steps to toughen its inspection regime for detecting clandestine nuclear-weapons programs. The perceived weakness of that regime has been cited as a principal flaw in the non-proliferation treaty system.

Opening the conference, Boutros-Ghali sidestepped the issue of extension but urged the nuclear powers to move toward eventual elimination of nuclear arms.

"No more testing. No more production . . . Reduction and destruction of all nuclear weapons and the means to make them should be humanity's great common cause," the UN chief declared.

Boutros-Ghali also called on the nuclear powers to strengthen limited assurances they have given non-nuclear states that they will not be subjected to nuclear attack.

The 1970 pact struck an historic bargain. The 178 signatory governments are committed to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons beyond five countries that acknowledge having them — the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China. In exchange, the five are pledged to work toward eliminating all nuclear arms.

The treaty also guarantees countries the right to develop peaceful nuclear technology under international oversight.

The treaty is credited with lessening the likelihood of a nuclear free-for-all in the world. But three countries that did not sign it — Israel, India and Pakistan — have developed nuclear-weapons capability. Two that did sign — Iraq and North Korea — are accused of having tried to build nuclear bombs.

Many non-nuclear countries complain the five nuclear powers have balked at meeting the treaty's commitment to move in good faith toward total disarmament.

The treaty had only a 25-year guaranteed run. The pact specified that in 1995, the signatories would have to decide whether to extend it indefinitely, or for a fixed period or periods.

The dispute between those who have nuclear weapons and those who don't is reflected in a still-unresolved debate over procedures to use when the extension question comes to a vote in early May.

Third World countries want a secret ballot but the United States and the other nuclear powers want voting by open roll call. That would enable them to better target supporters and opponents.

"Opposing a secret ballot can only mean the United States is worried about the outcome of the vote," said Stephanie Mills, a non-proliferation specialist with the environmental and anti-nuclear group Greenpeace.

U.S. officials said they have a rough majority in favor of indefinite extension going into the conference. But analysts said pushing through unconditional indefinite extension by a narrow majority would undermine the treaty's broad support.

Gadhafi threatens to defy UN embargo on flights

Globe & Mail 7 April 95

New York Times Service

TRIPOLI — Colonel Moammar Gadhafi says Libyan planes are preparing to defy a United Nations ban on flights to and from Libya and adds that his country might soon drop out of the UN.

In an interview Wednesday, Col. Gadhafi said he has notified Egypt, Sudan and Saudi Arabia that Libyan planes carrying pilgrims to Mecca will soon enter their airspace.

He vowed to retaliate against any country, including Libya's Arab neighbours, who prevented the Libyans from reaching the holy site of Mecca during the annual Muslim pilgrimage known as *hajj*.

"If sanctions mean that pilgrims are unable to go to Mecca, then this calls for a holy war against not only the United States, France and Great Britain, but the rest of the Arab world," he said. "If the Libyan planes are shot down or destroyed, if anything happens to these pilgrims, then it will mean that the Prophet's tomb is under the control of the United States and that Saudi Arabia is not an independent country.

"This is not a political issue. These pilgrims are going not to a country, but to God's house. And those that prevent us from worshipping there confront us at their peril."

The UN imposed the air embargo and banned the sale or transfer of military parts to Libya in April of 1992 after the country refused to hand over two Libyans wanted in connection with the 1988 bombing of a Pan American World Airways flight over Scotland in which 270 people were killed.

The Libyan leader also lashed out at the UN, saying it had become an instrument of the French, British and U.S. governments. He said Libya was considering withdrawing from the world body and joining Taiwan, Switzerland, the Vatican and the Pacific island of Nauru as a non-member state.

With Libya's refusal to hand over the suspects in the Pan Am bombing, the UN Security Council expanded the sanctions in December of 1993 by freezing Libyan assets around the world and denying the country access to a range of oil equipment.

The sanctions also were a response to Libya's refusal to co-operate with an inquiry into the 1989 bombing of a French airliner over Niger in which 171 people were killed. France has issued arrest warrants for four Libyans, including Col. Gadhafi's brother-in-law, in connection with that blast.

19

Three UN posts taken

Croatians invade rebel Serb enclave

WFP 2 May 1995

Reuters-AP-CP

SARAJEVO, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA — Croatian troops and armor poured across UN truce lines into a rebel Serb enclave in Croatia yesterday in an assault that overshadowed the end of a four-month ceasefire in neighboring Bosnia.

The Bosnian truce expired at noon without any major outbreak of fighting. However, snipers were active in Sarajevo and within hours had shot and killed two women in the city. Several mortar rounds were also reported to have hit the suburbs.

UN peacekeepers said 2,000 Croatian troops thrust into the Krajina Serb enclave in Western Slavonia at daybreak. Other units took three UN observation posts in no man's land in the Medak pocket in the south.

The Western Slavonia Serbs admitted losing considerable territory and retaliated by shelling nearby Croatian towns.

They also seized 115 UN civilian police and soldiers as human shields and appealed to Serbs in Yugoslavia and neighboring Bosnians for help.

Eight RCMP officers and one Canadian soldier attached to the UN are also in the area of the fighting but officials said all were safe.

The Canadian battalion on peacekeeping duty in sector south in Croatia, the Royal 22nd Regiment, was well away from the fighting.

"In our AOR (area of responsibility) as such, the Croatians haven't done anything," said Lt.-Col. Jacques Morneau, commanding officer of CANBAT1.

AP/Wm. J. Castello

"(But) in reaction to what happened in the north, the Serb brigade has withdrawn their tanks and artillery outside the (UN) weapons storage site and deployed them close to the zone that we patrol in anticipation of Croatian attacks."

As a result, his troops were on orange alert, an increased state of readiness in which they always carry their weapons, helmets and flak jackets, even in base camp.

The fighting was the worst between the two sides since September 1993. In the north, two Croatian warplanes tried to disable a bridge across the river Sava linking Serb territory in Bosnia and Croatia but their rockets missed, the UN said.

However, in the Croatian capital of Zagreb, officials said government forces were gaining control of the E-70 highway which cuts through Western Slavonia.

In Ottawa, Foreign Affairs Minister Andre Ouellet told reporters Canada was disappointed the ceasefire was not extended.

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UN raps Canada on child rights

Refugees, regional inequality cited

BY RUDY PLATIEL
The Globe and Mail

Canada's international reputation for protecting its children received a few knocks in a United Nations report yesterday, particularly on protecting the interests of children in immigration cases.

The UN's Committee on the Rights of the Child said that while Canada deserves praise for a number of things, there are also concerns such as "the emerging problem of child poverty" in the country and the removal of "unaccompanied" immigrant children who have been refused refugee status.

The committee lauded Canada for playing a key role in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in convening the 1990 World Summit for Children. But it also said that Canada has not paid sufficient attention to setting up a permanent monitoring system to ensure that those convention rights are protected in all parts of the country.

Barbara Jackman, a Toronto lawyer for the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees, which appeared before the UN's Geneva meeting in May, said the wording used in the report is the strongest diplomatic language that can be used.

The report acknowledged that the division of powers between the federal, provincial and territorial governments complicates matters. But it said that leaving it to the provinces to define the legal status of children born out of wedlock "may lead to different levels of legal protection . . . in various parts of the country."

The report also focused on what it said was a weakness in protecting the best interests of children in refugee and immigration situations.

It calls for speeding up family-reunification cases, and urges solutions "to avoid expulsions causing separation of families in the spirit of Article 9 of the convention."

Liberal plan raises UN concerns

Cut in social programs may hurt Canada's poor, committee warns

By Lisa Schlein
Canadian Press

WFT
5 May '95

GENEVA — A United Nations committee has expressed serious concern over Ottawa's intention to scrap the Canada Assistance Plan in favor of a new bill which could result in "the loss of rights for low income people."

The UN committee on economic, social and cultural rights plans to send a letter to the federal government describing its "grave concerns" over the repeal of the plan which, it observed, could breach Canada's obligations under the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights.

Those obligations require Canada to ensure that "the right to an adequate income" is available to everyone in the country.

This is believed to be the first time the committee has taken an initiative on an issue based on draft legislation as opposed to existing law.

The committee made its decision after listening to testimony from two delegates representing three Canadian intergovernmental organizations: the National Anti-Poverty Organization, the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

Incomplete story

Winnipeg MP Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's minister of human resources, said yesterday the UN committee didn't have the whole story.

"It would be important that a committee like that also fully understand what the benefits of the transfer payment will be. Just to hear from a group of critics wouldn't give them a balanced approach," Axworthy said outside the House.

"We'd be more than happy to demonstrate that if we had continued under the status quo, many of our social programs would be undermined."

Earlier this week, the delegates told the committee that the proposed new legislation, Bill C-76 currently before Parliament, could result in the "very serious withdrawal of legal protections and rights for those in poverty."

Third reading

The bill is expected to come up for a third reading next month and be proclaimed in July.

It would cut $7 billion from transfer payments to the provinces for social programs over the next three years and hand over "block funding" to each province.

In return, the provinces would no longer have to abide by federal standards on social and economic assistance to the poor.

"I know the government has a deficit in Canada," said Sarah Sharpe, chairwoman of the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues. "But I don't know why the government has to take away rights that have been in effect for 30 years in Canada, from the most vulnerable in Canadian society."

Kenneth Osborne Rattray, a Jamaican human rights expert, said the committee couldn't predict the fate of Bill C-76, but if it should become law, "it would constitute a retrogressive action."

Canada also came under international rebuke two years ago, when the committee criticized the former federal Tory government for not doing enough to fight poverty.

The Canadian delegates said the government should let the Supreme Court decide if Bill C-76 infringes on the rights of Canadians.

Ottawa will have a chance to give its side of the story later this year.

21

High-seas police get UN clout

Tobin says Canada's seizure of Spanish vessel helped muster European support

4 August 1995

BY DAN WESTELL
The Globe and Mail

Canada will be legally able to seize vessels on the high seas that violate domestic fisheries rules under a new United Nations treaty overturning 500 years of international law in favour of conservation.

The UN Conference on Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks has reached a consensus that will be formally approved today giving coastal states such as Canada much more control over fishing for migratory stocks such as cod or turbot by fleets far from their home waters.

"We have a substantive convention, a binding convention, and one with real teeth," a pleased Fisheries Minister Brian Tobin said in an interview from New York.

Among other achievements, he said, "a clear right [has been] established for coastal states to take direct enforcement measures on the high seas beyond 200 miles" — the limit of national jurisdiction.

When 30 nations have ratified the convention (and the Foreign Affairs Department will be actively lobbying other countries to do so, Mr. Tobin said), the law will permit Canada to do something that it did illegally earlier this year.

Mr. Tobin said Canada's seizure of a Spanish vessel convinced the European Union countries, some of which were strongly opposed to any limits on deep-sea fishing, that they should support the convention.

Before the seizure, the EU saw its options as the status quo — that is unrestricted fishing beyond the 200-mile limit — or a binding convention; after the seizure, the options became a binding convention or unilateral action by coastal states, he said.

But others familiar with the two years of negotiations credit convention chairman Satya Nandan of Fiji

Please see UN / A4

• From Page A1

Mr. Nandan nudged the parties together by encouraging them to back off positions based on "rights" and adopt common-sense proposals designed to address the obvious disappearance of fish stocks.

The right to seize a vessel in international waters is "a departure from a 500-year tradition, that is the freedom of the high seas," Mr. Tobin said.

"There is no longer the freedom to fish on the high seas . . . it's over," a UN official said yesterday, quoting remarks made at a briefing by Mr. Nandan.

The convention covers only fish caught outside the 200-mile limit, but it has the effect of bringing all fishing countries under the control of fishing organizations. And individual countries can enforce the deal.

As outlined by Mr. Tobin, Canadian government experts and UN observers, the convention means that responsiblity for setting quotas remains with regional organizations, such as the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, whose 14 members include Canada and many EU countries. But while NAFO rules applied only to members — so vessels fishing under flags of convenience were essentially unregulated — the regional rules now apply to all vessels fishing in the area.

'We have a substantive convention, a binding convention, and one with real teeth.'

In the past, when NAFO assigned quotas, members who disagreed could opt out and set their own limits. Now quotas must be consistent with the policy set by the coastal state which shares the stock, and if one member tries to undermine that decision with its own quota, the dispute can be taken to an independent tribunal set up under the UN's Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Overfishing by countries unwilling or unable to control their fleets has been a serious problem. Under NAFO, Canadian enforcement officers had the right to board and inspect other vessels.

Under the convention, if an officer finds a serious violation, the flag country — the state where the vessel is registered — must investigate. If the flag state fails to react in 72 hours, the officers can take the ship to port and hold it until the country meets its obligations.

This will be particularly effective against vessels operating under flags of convenience because countries that register those vessels often have no way and no inclination to get an officer aboard one of "their" vessels in 72 hours.

Errant vessels flying flags of convenience "are going to be visiting Halifax or St. John's," a Canadian official said.

'There is no longer the freedom to fish on the high seas . . . it's over.'

While recognizing the gains made, the environmental organization Greenpeace said the arrangement fell short because it failed to block multi-billion dollar government subsidies which encourage overfishing.

The agreement to be approved today does not cover eels and salmon. The core coastal states supporting it were Canada, Argentina, Iceland, Chile, Peru, Norway, New Zealand, Indonesia.

Six countries — Spain, Japan, Poland, Russia, South Korea and Taiwan — catch 90 per cent of the high seas take, and it did not address the 27 million tonnes of fish caught and discarded each year, a major factor in declining stocks.

Even as UN translators put the finishing touches on versions of the agreement, which had to be translated into six languages for today's plenary session, U.S. President Bill Clinton approved a $53-million (U.S.) disaster-relief package for U.S. fishermen who lost their jobs because of a lack of fish.

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